

The only thing you can say today, Mr. Trump, is that you are committed to an emergency both for Hurricane disasters and others, but as well as the opioid crisis.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD my letter to the President:

Mr. President, thank you for the invitation for Members of Congress to attend the unveiling of your emergency declaration on combatting the opioid epidemic.

This is indeed an epidemic that I agree must be addressed immediately. This problem has claimed many lives throughout our country, including my state of Texas and my home district of Houston.

It is imperative that we act. It is equally imperative that we act responsibly and intelligently.

We cannot merely make promises on which the American people are waiting for us to deliver, if we know that those promises will not come right away.

We must have a clear goal and long-term commitment to truly combatting this devastating problem in the opioid crisis.

Mr. President, where will this money come from, as this is a very costly endeavor?

New funding streams would be required, and thus, making such a declaration without forethought relative to significant funding will prove to be a futile effort.

There must be a strategy which we can realistically and effectively execute without causing harm to equally important and urgent areas.

Despite your previous promise to address the opioid crisis, at a Commission meeting last week, no real solution was developed.

Instead, the Commission suggested that funding be taken out of the Public Health Service Act or the Stafford Act, both of which are problematic.

First, I believe the nation's public health emergency fund is empty.

Second, the Stafford Act funds disaster relief for hurricanes and wildfires, which are under the jurisdiction of FEMA.

As a Member of Congress that recently watched the fatal devastation inflicted upon my city of Houston, I can tell you firsthand, that we are still trying to wrap our minds around the catastrophic loss and how to now rebuild.

America has experienced mass casualties due to recent hurricanes that occurred within the span of a month period, with approximate death tolls of 82 in Texas and Louisiana, 72 in Florida, 51 in Puerto Rico and countless disruptions and damages.

The loss of lives, businesses and properties is astronomical as we continue to assess the damage in TX, LA, FL, VI and P.R.

Therefore, I must caution the administration, to responsibly bear these facts in mind, as it attempts to combat the opioid epidemic, which is undoubtedly a very important issue.

THE 71ST RESCUE SQUADRON IS RECOGNIZED FOR ITS RESCUE EFFORTS

(Mr. CARTER of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 71st

Rescue Squadron of the United States Air Force, which is stationed at Moody Air Force Base in the first District of Georgia.

They responded as part of the 23rd Wing effort by mobilizing their personnel and equipment in order to help the victims of Hurricane Harvey in Texas.

The 71st Rescue Squadron successfully evacuated 308 flood victims and 38 family pets. They repositioned 15 rescue crafts and teams to access difficult areas, saving 1,100 lives.

In addition, they moved 83 tons of cargo and delivered 23,000 gallons of fuel, which was used to conduct helicopter search and rescues.

Because of their dedication to this country, this group received the That Others May Live Squadron of the Year Award for the Air Force.

Thank you, 71st Rescue Squadron, for your extensive efforts to help the citizens of this country.

HANNAH AHLERS WAS THE "COOL" MOM

(Mr. KIHUEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KIHUEN. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned a couple of weeks ago, I plan to speak on this floor about each victim who lost their life during the terrible shooting on October 1 in Las Vegas. My goal is to honor their lives and to ensure that they will never be forgotten.

Today I rise to remember Hannah Ahlers, a loving wife, mother, daughter, sister, and friend, whose life was taken far too soon.

Hannah lived in Beaumont, California, and had traveled to Las Vegas with her husband, Brian, and three other couples to attend the Route 91 Harvest music festival.

Friends and family have described Hannah as a beautiful person inside and out, who was full of joy, and always went out of her way to help her friends and family.

Her commitment to her friends, family, and community was felt by everyone. She could light up the room at any moment she walked in. Her father-in-law described her as a young Mary Tyler Moore.

She was also an amazing and devoted mother to her three children, Briannah, Brice, and Hailey. Her kids' friends thought she was the cool mom, and they loved to be around her. She lived her life to the fullest, and enjoyed both the simple pleasures and outdoor thrills, like the skydiving community she was a part of.

I would like to extend my deepest condolences to Hannah's friends and family. Please know that the city of Las Vegas in Nevada and the whole country grieve with you. This is a tragedy that should have never happened.

OFFICER CRAIG LEHNER LIVED A LIFE OF HEROISM

(Mr. COLLINS of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COLLINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Officer Craig Lehner, a Buffalo police officer who lived a life of heroism and who tragically died during a recent training exercise on the Niagara River.

Officer Lehner was a 9-year veteran of the Buffalo Police Department, serving on the underwater recovery team, and also serving as a K-9 officer. His partner, a 4-year-old German Shepherd named Shield, served alongside him.

Officer Lehner served our country for 16 years as an Army National Guard military police officer. Having served in Iraq and Guantanamo Bay, he was a well-decorated staff sergeant, awarded more than a dozen medals for his bravery and military achievements.

Officer Lehner made the ultimate sacrifice, and we will be forever grateful for his service. He will be remembered for his bravery and keeping Americans safe both abroad and in western New York.

I offer condolences to his mother, Kathleen, and all of his surviving family during this very difficult time.

HONORING BERTHA WATSON HENRY

(Mr. DEUTCH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the hard work and esteemed career of Broward County Administrator Bertha Watson Henry.

This week, Bertha is being honored at the International City and County Management Association's annual conference in San Antonio as the recipient of the Mark E. Keane Memorial Award for Excellence. I could not think of a more deserving recipient for this prestigious award.

Under Henry's leadership, Broward County successfully navigated the 2008 recession with stable finances and a strong recovery. She has helped Broward maintain a triple A bond rating since 2014, something only three other Florida counties have accomplished.

She has led construction of a new 714,000-square-foot county courthouse, a 40,000-square-foot animal adoption center, and she renegotiated financial agreements to protect Broward's interest in the fourth largest National Hockey League venue in the U.S.

Administrator Henry's recognition at ICMA is also historic, as Bertha is the first-ever African-American woman to receive the Keane Award for Excellence. Most importantly, this achievement is a reflection of Bertha's commitment to her neighbors, the 1.9 million Floridians who called Broward County home.

As she continues to steer Broward County's 60 agencies and a budget of nearly \$5 billion, Bertha Henry deserves this award because of the way she has made Broward County a better place to live, to work, to play, and to visit.

Bertha, thank you for your outstanding service, and congratulations on the well-deserved honor.

HERKIMER CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT ROBERT MILLER TURNS AROUND GRADUATION RATES

(Ms. TENNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Robert Miller, superintendent of the Herkimer Central School District.

When Robert Miller became superintendent of the Herkimer Central School District in 2013, he was facing a problem that many superintendents across this country are facing: a low and decreasing graduation rate.

However, in the 4 years since Mr. Miller began in his new role, Herkimer has seen a drastic turnaround. The graduation rate has increased 11 percent, from 69 to 80 percent.

However, in 2006, Herkimer's graduation rates were at 87 percent. Mr. Miller has made it his mission to ensure that Herkimer Central School District reaches that number again.

Mr. Miller noted that it was the dedication of both teachers and administrators that led to the significant increase. Their ability and willingness to intervene with students at risk has helped these students successfully move to the next stage of their lives with the skills they need to contribute positively to our community.

Thank you to Superintendent Miller and the dedicated staff at Herkimer Central School District for your tremendous work and commitment to our next generation of leaders. I know your effort will continue inspiring our students for years to come.

BOY SCOUT TROOP 728 CELEBRATES 70 YEARS

(Mr. ESPAILLAT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to rise today to celebrate the 70th anniversary of Boy Scout Troop 728.

This troop's longstanding commitment to instilling positive social values and building self-esteem and self-reliance in young men has provided a great benefit to our community.

Opened in 1947, Troop 728 has produced a tradition of excellence. It has been led by many dedicated Scoutmasters over its 70-year history, each of whom has contributed to the legacy of the troop. These passionate,

active leaders allow the memories of past leaders to continue to flourish in the troop's culture today.

Traditions of Troop 728 include Scout breakfasts, hiking, camping trips, and summer camp. Additionally, Scoutmasters focus instilling leadership skills in troop members and developing leaders for the 21st century.

Troop 728 has produced over 30 Eagle Scouts, the most prestigious award that any young man can earn in Scouting. This demonstrates their continued commitment to their long legacy of service throughout the community.

On this special anniversary, I would like to congratulate the leaders and members of Troop 728 for all of their successes.

HALLE THOMPSON LIVES AMONGST THE HEAVENLY HOST

(Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, the image beside me is of a young lady named Halle Thompson, who was tragically killed in a car crash in my district. I penned this letter to her parents:

"Dear Mr. and Mrs. Thompson,

"Ryan, Janna, my own heart is rendered as I pen this letter of encouragement and condolence.

"Your beautiful daughter Halle is, no doubt, in the presence of our beloved lady and our loving, forgiving Savior. You are each, no doubt, surrounded by the angels of Christ, as you endeavor each day to endure the grief of your loss, even as you present a strong and determined front to honor the life and spirit of your daughter.

"I have personal insight relative to your pain, having lost my own first-born, my beautiful Daniela, long ago on the 10th day of November 1990.

"I wish to compassionately convey it has come onto my heart that your Halle is present at this moment with my own Daniela, looking upon you both with adoration as you prayerfully honor and respect our Lord's mysterious will.

"Please know that my prayers are with you and that my own quiet service to America and our fellow man is dedicated this day to the beautiful Halle, angelic now, as she lives amongst the Heavenly Host.

"Respectfully, I remain, your humble servant."

NATIONAL FOREST PRODUCTS WEEK

(Mr. SCHRADER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SCHRADER. Mr. Speaker, as co-chair of the House Paper and Packaging Caucus, I rise today to recognize the 57th anniversary of National Forest Products Week.

As an Oregonian, this week takes on special significance for me and my con-

stituents. Oregon is home to over 174 wood products, paper, and packaging manufacturing facilities that make nearly \$11 billion in products annually and contribute over \$2 billion to the State and local economies through wages and compensation.

I would like to recognize and thank the nearly 38,000 hardworking men and women employed by the forest products industry in my State. Your contributions to our State and your local communities are greatly appreciated.

In this country, we are fortunate to have the renewable natural resources and domestic manufacturing to be able to provide Americans with the paper or packaging tissue and wood products that are central to modern life and the modern economy.

I want to thank and congratulate the people and employees in the forest products industry for the valuable role they play in the economy not only in my State and district, but to rural communities across this country.

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LET'S WORK ON BIPARTISAN TAX REFORM

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, we cannot allow the Republican majority to trade away creating jobs here in America for doling out massive tax breaks to wealthy corporations that have no intention of investing here in the United States of America. The Republican plan will actually fuel more job outsourcing and move benefits to shareholders and overpaid CEOs, not the workers of our country.

We can't allow Republicans to cut education, cut Medicare, cut Social Security, cut Medicaid, which serve the elderly and the ill. Eighty percent of the tax giveaways in their plan go to the top 1 percent.

Untargeted tax cuts don't create jobs. In fact, when Congress, during the 1980s, passed a tax cut, companies couldn't outsource middle class jobs fast enough. It was a bad deal then, and it is a bad deal now.

Our country can't afford to balloon the deficit by \$1.5 trillion so Wall Street can appease their shareholders a little more and stack the decks against American workers. Tax reform should not result in the outsourcing of our jobs. It should result in investing here in the United States of America, and that begins with real tax reform, not scam tax reform.

COUNTRY BEFORE PARTY AND PATRIOTISM BEFORE POLITICS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GAETZ). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGO) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.